
Executive Summary

The **Utah Department of Environmental Quality** (DEQ) presents the **Utah Report on the Environment 2006**, a summary of the state's environment based on state and national standards and environmental goals. Although all facets of the environment are interrelated, for discussion purposes, the report has been divided into three main sections: **air**, **land** and **water**. In each section, the data have been compiled to paint a broad portrait of the environment today and challenges ahead. Most importantly, the examples show how communities have worked together to protect and enhance Utah's environment. Lastly, this report includes a discussion on **mercury**, which like many other contaminants, impacts air, land and water. Most importantly, we welcome your comments and feedback.

The report is available at: www.deq.utah.gov/envrpt. Please visit the comment page to provide feedback.



Cleaner Air

Utah's air has become significantly cleaner in the last 25 years. Stricter regulations for motor vehicles and industry, as well as other emission reduction programs, have reduced smog and improved visibility. In the early 1980s, the health standards for four of the six criteria pollutants identified by the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) were violated in one or more Utah counties. As of Dec. 18, 2006, all Utah counties attain health standards in all EPA categories. Remarkably, the improvement comes after significant population growth. Tougher new EPA rules on fine particle pollution, however, will make it difficult for the Wasatch Front to meet the standards.

Cleaner Land

The amount of toxic chemical releases into the environment has steadily declined in recent years. This is the result of both regulatory and voluntary efforts. Prior to the 1970s, disposal of various wastes lacked regulatory oversight and guidance. Consequently, some wastes were discarded without regard for their impact to human health and the environment. That situation has improved with the establishment of solid and hazardous waste regulations designed to protect the environment and public health. Through voluntary clean up programs, thousands of acres of commercial and residential properties have been cleaned and put back into beneficial use.



Cleaner Water

Utah has made significant strides in water quality. Passage of the 1972 federal **Clean Water Act** and the implementation of wastewater discharge permits have reduced lake and stream pollution. Our drinking water systems have vastly improved their compliance with drinking water requirements. The **Safe Drinking Water Act** mandates that EPA, states and water systems protect consumers from unsafe drinking water. It has been more than two decades since a water borne disease outbreak has been reported in Utah.

About this Report

This report is the work of everyone at DEQ who supplied important information and data to the **Leadership Development Committee**, a hand-picked group comprised of representatives from each of DEQ's six divisions. These employees examined the environmental data and drafted sections of this report. It was particularly important to the committee that the report be understandable to the general public. The members of the committee are:

- Jon Black, Division of Air Quality;
- Harry Campbell, Division of Water Quality;
- Jeff Emmons, Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste;
- John Hultquist, Division of Radiation Control;
- Kate Johnson, Division of Drinking Water; and
- Jason Wilde, Division of Environmental Response and Remediation

The Leadership Development Committee developed the report under the direction of Brad Johnson, director of the Division of Environmental Response and Remediation. The document was edited by Donna Kemp Spangler, the public information officer for DEQ. Leah Ann Lamb, director of the Office of Planning and Public Affairs and her staff assisted in the compilation of the data used in this report. The layout and design was done by Larry Clarkson of Clarkson Creative. The report is printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks. Any portion of this report may be reprinted, provided the Utah Department of Environmental Quality is given appropriate credit.

